Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ADDIS 10053 261135Z

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ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 EA-11 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-11

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20

USIA-15 AID-20 OMB-01 NIC-01 DRC-01 ACDA-19 MC-02

IGA-02 TRSE-00 EB-11 /187 W
---------- 058171
R 260948Z AUG 74
FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0711
INFO AMCONSUL ASMARA
AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
USLO PEKING
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GERMANY
SECDEF WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L ADDIS ABABA 10053

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, MASS, ET, US, UR, CH
SUBJECT: IMPLICATIONS OF EDITORIAL SUGGESTING DESIRABILITY OF
REORIENTING ETHIOPIAN FOREIGN POLICY

SECDEF FOR ISA

REF: ADDIS 9909

1. SUMMARY. THE RECENT EDITORIAL IN ETHIOPIAN HERALD ENTITLED "REORIENTATION" IMPLICITLY THREATENED THAT ETHIOPIA MAY BE FORCED TO REORIENT ITS FOREIGN POLICY SOON BECAUSE THE US IS NOT PROVIDING ETHIOPIA WITH SUFFICIENT MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO WITHSTAND THE SOMALI THREAT. THIS EDITORIAL IS FIRST PUBLIC AIRING IN ETHIOPIA OF A CONTINGENCY WHICH WE HAVE REGARDED FOR SOME TIME AS A SERIOUS ONE. THE POSSIBILITY OF ETHIOPIA'S TURNING TO CHINA OR THE USSR AS ITS PRINCIPAL SOURCE OF MILITARY ASSISTANCE IS EVEN
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 ADDIS 10053 261135Z

MORE OBVIOUS NOW THAT IT WAS A YEAR AGO. WE THINK THIS POSSIBIL-

Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

ITY COULD BE ELIMINATED ONLY BY A MASSIVE INCREASE IN THE US MIL-
ITARY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM WHICH IS ENTIRELY OUT OF REACH AT PRE-
SENT. WE PLAN TO REACT TO THE EDITORIAL IN OUR DISCUSSIONS WITH
ETHIOPIANS IN A MANNER WHICH INDICATES THAT IT HAS NOT FRIGHTENED
US AND THAT WE ARE CONFIDENT THE IEG WILL CAREFULLY CONSIDER ALL
CONSEQUENCES BEFORE BECOMING DEPENDENT ON THE CHINESE OR SOVIETS
FOR MILITARY ASSISTANCE. END SUMMARY.

2. WE HAVE NOW VERIFIED (ADDIS 10022) THAT THIS EDITORIAL RE-
FLECTED VIEWS WHICH ARE BEING EXPRESSED BY CHAIRMAN OF THE ARMED
FORCES COORDINATING COMMITTEE (AFCC). PURPOSE OF EDITORIAL WAS
CLEARLY TO HELP IN PRESSURING USG INTO INCREASING ITS MILITARY
ASSISTANCE TO ETHIOPIA.

3. WE HAVE CAREFULLY CONSIDERED HOW WE SHOULD REACT TO THIS EDI-
TORIAL. WE DO NOT THINK EMBASSY SHOULD REACT ANGRILY OR IN A
MANNER WHICH SUGGESTS THAT EDITORIAL HAS FRIGHTENED US. TO REACT
ANGRILY TO THE OFFICIAL GOVERNMENT WOULD ACCOMPLISH NOTHING WITH
AFCC AND MIGHT SIMPLY RAISE THEIR HACKLES. TO INDICATE TO THE
OFFICIAL GOVERNMENT THAT WE ARE GREATLY CONCERNED BY EDITORIAL
MIGHT WELL SUGGEST TO AFCC THAT IT CAN INFLUENCE US BY CONTINUING
TO BRANDISH THREAT OF TURNING TO CHINESE OR SOVIETS.

4. WE COULD TRY TO COUNTER THESIS OF EDITORIAL BY PUBLICIZING
THE MILITARY ASSISTANCE WE ARE PROVIDING IEG. HOWEVER ETHIOPIAN
MILITARY WOULD NOT BE SATISFIED BY WHAT WE COULD SAY AND WE SUS-
PECT THAT SOMALIA IS MORE LIKELY BE DETERRED BY UNCERTAINTY RE-
GARDING EXTENT OF US ASSISTANCE THAN BY CONFIRMED DATA ON THAT
SUBJECT.

5. WE COULD IGNORE THE EDITORIAL ENTIRELY IN OUR CONVERSATIONS
WITH ETHIOPIANS, BUT THEY MIGHT SIMPLY CONCLUDE FROM THIS THAT
OUR POSTURE IS COMATOSE RATHER THAN ALERT.

6. WE BELIEVE OUR BEST REACTION IS TO DISCUSS EDITORIAL IN A
CALM FASHION AT THE RIGHT TIME WITH THE RIGHT ETHIOPIANS. WE
WILL INDICATE THAT WE HAVE NOTED THE EDITORIAL AND ARE TAKING IT
SERIOUSLY. THE BASIC LINE WE PLAN TO TAKE, HOWEVER, IS THAT USG
IS PROVIDING IEG WITH AS MUCH MILITARY ASSISTANCE AS POSSIBLE,
THAT WE REALIZE IEG MIGHT DECIDE TO TURN ELSEWHERE FOR SUPPLEMEN-
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TARY MILITARY ASSISTANCE, THAT WE HAVE ALREADY PUT IN A FAVOR-
ABLE WORD WITH IRAN IN THIS REGARD, THAT WE ARE PREPARED TO DO
LIKEWISE WITH SAUDI ARABIA, AND THAT WE ARE CONFIDENT THE IEG
WOULD CAREFULLY WEIGH ALL THE CONSEQUENCES BEFORE TURNING ELSE-
WHERE. (ASSISTANT SECRETARY NEWSOM TOOK SIMILAR POSITION WITH
PRIME MINISTER AKLILU LAST NOVEMBER. SEE PARA 11 OF ADDIS
12835.) A POINT WHICH WE WILL EMPHASIZE IS THAT GENERAL AMAN CAN
HARDLY HOPE TO DETER A SOMALI ATTACK BY TALKING OF AN ETHIOPIAN

Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

COUNTER-THRUST INTO SOMALIA (ADDIS 9986) IF THE ETHIOPIAN PRESS IS TAKING THE LINE THAT THE ETHIOPIAN MILITARY POSITION IS PITIFULLY WEAK. THE EDITORIAL IN QUESTION WAS ILL ADVISED IN TERMS OF ETHIOPIA'S STRATEGY OF DETERRENCE.

7. IN ADDITION EMBASSY AND MAAG WILL CONTINUE PREVIOUS EFFORTS (AS RECENTLY WITH PRIME MINISTER, MINISTER OF DEFENSE, AND MINISTER OF COMMERCE) TO BROADEN UNDERSTANDING OF THE MILITARY ASSISTANCE WHICH USG IS CURRENTLY OFFERING. THIS WILL UNQUESTIONABLY BE TOUGH BUT WE WILL CONTINUE TO HAMMER AWAY AT IT. AS HAS LONG BEEN THE CASE, WE COULD EITHER EMPHASIZE THE CONGRESSIONAL LIMITATIONS ON MILITARY ASSISTANCE OR WE COULD DISPARAGE THE SOMALI THREAT. ALTHOUGH WE ADMITTEDLY FIND LITTLE UNDERSTANDING OF THE FIRST ARGUMENT, WE ARE CONVINCED THAT ETHIOPIANS WILL HAVE NO RESPECT FOR OUR INTELLIGENCE, IN BOTH SENSES, SHOULD WE PRESS THE SECOND THESIS.

8. THE MORE FUNDAMENTAL QUESTION RAISED BY EDITORIAL IN QUESTION IS WHETHER IEG IS IN FACT LIKELY TO TURN TO ANOTHER SOURCE OF MILITARY EQUIPMENT. WE DISCUSSED THIS POSSIBILITY LAST APRIL IN ADDIS 4228 AND CONTINUE TO BELIEVE IT IS A SERIOUS ONE. THE FACT THAT MILITARY CONTROL OVER CIVILIAN GOVERNMENT HAS INCREASED SINCE THAT TIME, AND THAT THE RADICAL ELEMENT AMONG THE MILITARY IS STRONGER NOW, MEANS THAT THE POSSIBILITY IS SOMEWHAT GREATER NOW THAN IT WAS THEN. WE BELIEVE THIS POSSIBILITY COULD NOT BE ELIMINATED UNLESS USG WERE WILLING TO REVISE DRASTICALLY ITS WORLDWIDE PRIORITIES FOR MILITARY ASSISTANCE IN FY 75 AND SET ASIDE PERHAPS $100 MILLION IN GRANT AID FOR ETHIOPIA. MOREOVER ANOTHER LARGE PROGRAM WOULD PROBABLY BE NECESSARY IN FY 76. TO BEST OF OUR KNOWLEDGE A PROGRAM OF THIS NATURE IS OUT OF THE QUESTION FOR ETHIOPIA AT PRESENT. MOREOVER, AS WE POINTED OUT IN PARA 4 OF ADDIS 4228, WORD OF SUCH A PROGRAM "WOULD CERTAINLY STIMULATE URGENT SOMALI PLEAS FOR INCREASED ARMS DELIVERIES TO CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 ADDIS 10053 261135Z

WHICH USSR MIGHT RESPOND. USG IS ALL TOO FAMILIAR WITH ESCALATION OF THIS NATURE."

9. WE SEE NO BETTER POLICY THAN TO CONTINUE PRESENT LEVELS OF THE MILITARY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM AND ENCOURAGE ETHIOPIA TO OBTAIN SUCH ADDITIONAL PURCHASING POWER AS IT CAN FROM FRIENDLY SOURCES, PARTICULARLY IRAN AND SAUDIA ARABIA. AS WE HAVE SAID BEFORE, HOWEVER (PARAS 3 & 9 OF ADDIS 4228), THE USG SHOULD FULLY REALIZE THAT THE FINAL RESULT OF A POLICY WHICH PROVIDES THE IEG CONSIDERABLY LESS THAN IT CONSIDERS NECESSARY FOR ITS DEFENSE MAY BE WHAT ONE IN EARLIER YEARS MIGHT HAVE CALLED "THE LOSS OF ETHIOPIA." WE HAVE WONDERED WHETHER THE SITUATION COULD BE ALLEVIATED SOMEWHAT IF THE USG URGED THE USSR TO RESTRAIN ITS DELIVERIES TO COMALIA, OR IF THE USG DISCUSSED WITH SOME NATO ALLIES THE POSSIBILITY OF THEIR PROVIDING DIPLOMATIC, HARDWARE, OR FINANCIAL SUP-

Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

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PORT TO ETHIOPIA, BUT THE DEPARTMENT HAS NOT REACTED FAVORABLY TO
THESE SUGGESTIONS.
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